POPULAR CULTURE IN EAST ASIA

Instructor: Melissa Mei-Lin Chan

MWF

8/27 Course Introduction

- Go through Scalar site for the course
  - *Course description*
  - *Rubrics*
  - *Weekly schedule*
  - *Discussion questions*
- Self introductions
- Sign up for group presentations
- For next time…

8/29 Popular Culture & East Asia

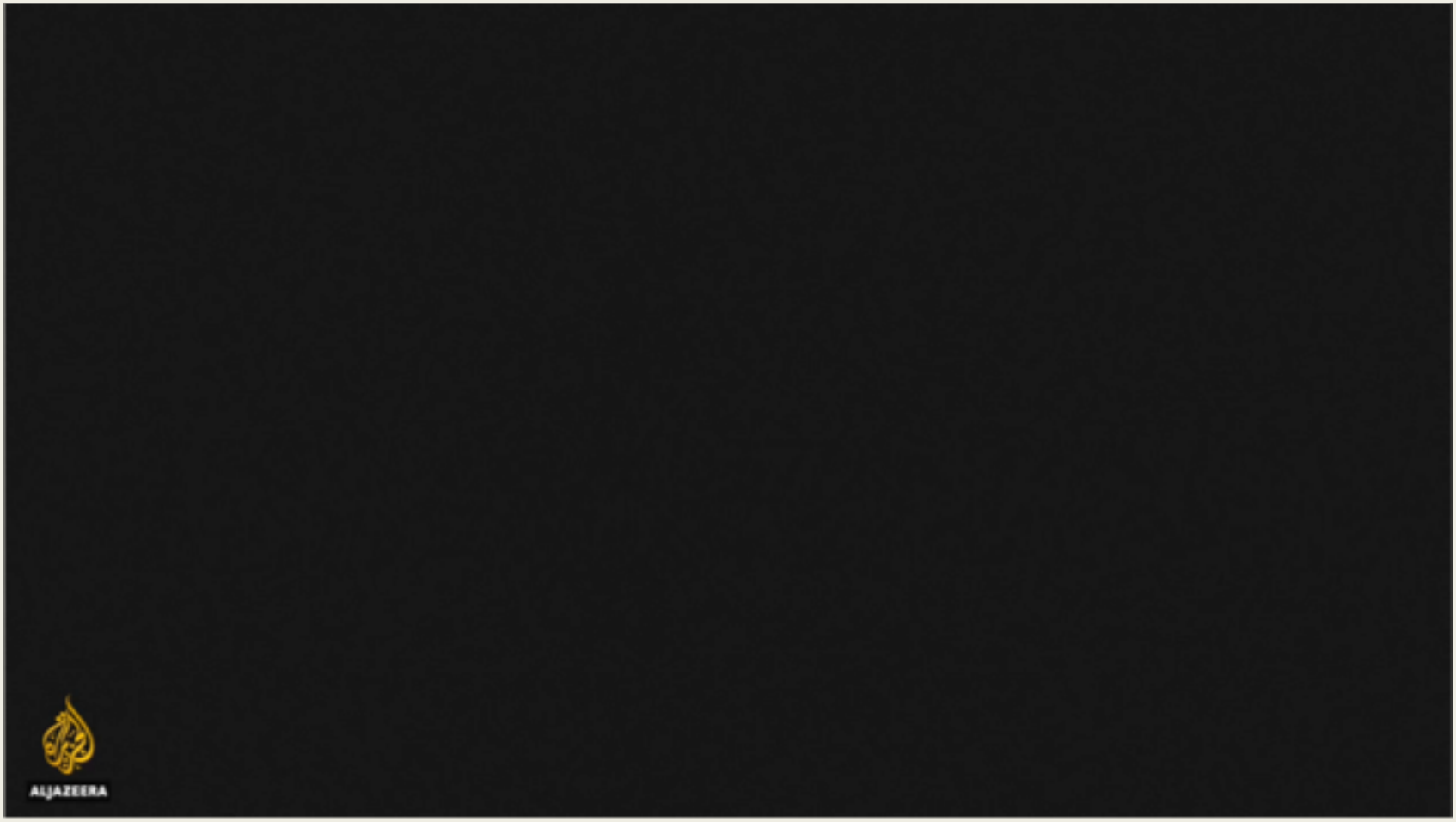
- We have established that popular culture is contingent. What aspects do we need to consider when discussing popular culture? Is pop culture the same as popular culture? What are the limitations of a term like "popular culture"? What are the advantages of such terms?
- There are numerous countries that make up what we know as East Asia. How should we define "East Asia"? Is it a geographical region? What is the relationship between these countries? Why are they grouped together? How does it relate to "Asia" more generally? What are the implications of using a category like "East Asia"?
- Keywords: Popular Culture, Media, Mass Culture, East Asia, Asia as Method

WHAT IS POPULAR CULTURE

- High vs Low
  - *What is your understanding of high culture? Give some examples.*
  - *What is low culture? What are some examples in today's society?*
  - *What are the implications of calling something high or low?*
  - *Is low culture equivalent to popular culture?*

MASS CULTURE?

- Mass culture
- Mass Media + ideology





DEFINING EAST ASIA

- Cold War
- East Asia and Regional Interconnection
- Asia as method

8/31 Critical Reading Workshop

- CRA & Searching
- Discussion of Behind the Lies
- Sources
- Finding an argument
- Group Facilitation Parameters



No keywords today!

Behind the Lies my Teacher Told Me

- Listening to "Behind the Lies My Teacher Told Me," what does it tell you about how we establish what is fact? How does the podcast address what is a credible source? Who gets to decide what is credible and not? How do sources get interpreted in our current society? How do sources become substantive of history?

Sources

- Primary Source (original source, evidence)
  - *A text or artifact that was created by those who had a connection with the topic or event*
  - *The text you are interpreting critically for this class: a film, video, podcast.*
  - *Generally not a critical essay unless you're researching intellectual history (or something like that)*

- Secondary source
  - *Critical essays*
  - *Generally secondary sources discuss primary sources. For example, the essays we read in this course are secondary sources that discuss the films we watch in the class as their primary course.*

One Armed Swordsman



Find the argument

This paper explores the ethics surrounding the representation of bodies that are disabled in martial arts films. The martial arts genre in Chinese and Sinophone cinema has been predominantly discussed in terms of a national body. Scholars, such as Stephen Teo, have argued that the national and cultural nationalism are the predominant concerns of martial arts films. The genre also features disabled bodies with films like *The One-Armed Swordsman* (1976) by Chang Cheh, and research surrounding these representations have focused on how these bodies exemplify fears of castration and national humiliation. The sites in which these films were made and circulated, however, was not in the People's Republic of China, which is ostensibly the national in relation to studies of Chinese cinema, but in Sinophone spaces, such as Hong Kong and Taiwan, whose national sovereignty has either been contested or simply denied. The national, therefore, is not sufficient to discuss representations of disability, and we must consider the ethics surrounding such depiction rather than analyzing them solely in terms of their relation to the national. I argue the ethical systems surrounding disability in martial arts films must first disavow the national. The ethics of imagining a body that is disabled, particularly in Sinophone sites, move away from a national system and towards a precariously networked ethics. Sinophone studies has emphasized the localization of culture, and I propose that it is also a localization of image where the Chinese body can no longer persist because the national has fallen away. Through an analysis of Chang's film, I illustrate how a Sinophone body emerges and moves locally. The ethical system of mobilizing a disabled body in the film is not one that refers to the People's Republic or even traditional Confucian codes but one that is particularly localized to the context of a 1970s Hong Kong that is grappling with colonialism and labor crises. Intersecting with studies of nationalism and national cinema, postcolonial studies, and disability studies, this paper aims to recast the discourse surrounding Chinese martial arts cinema and Chinese cinema more broadly.

Group Facilitation Guidelines

- Discussion Questions
  - *Email them to me 24 hours before your facilitation day*
  - *Don't write yes or no questions*
  - *Successful questions usually start with "what" or "how"*
  - *Ask questions about the readings and their arguments*
- Engage your classmates in discussion (ie: not you talking for 15 minutes straight)
- Respond to your classmates questions
- Remember, facilitations are reciprocal
- When you're on the struggle bus, I will help you, so don't be afraid to ask difficult questions.
- This assignment is meant to be collaborative: peer eval is due within 48 hours of your facilitation or you will not get a grade.

WEEK 2

Letting fists do the talking: Body Politics in Martial arts and Kung Fu Films

9/5 Wuxia: Chinese martial arts cinema history

- Where are we at now- Weekly Schedule
- Scalar: d3Xa63G
- Post #1
- Will upload first batch of slides by Friday 9/7
- Office Hours today?
- Chinese Cinema History & Martial Arts Genre Films

Discussion Questions

- 1. Have you seen a martial arts film before? If so, which one? How was it different from other action films? What made it a martial arts film to you?
- 2. This course is based around the notion of popular culture in East Asia. How is the martial arts genre part of popular culture? How does the martial arts genre, especially of films, participate in global flows of popular culture?

- Keywords: Wuxia, Kung Fu , cinema history, literature

Early Martial Arts Cinema

- The Battle of Dingjunshan 1905
- Martial chivalry & Wuxia Xiaoshuo
- Intense popularity from the 1920s
- Shanghai
- A bit of a history lesson
  - *World War II*
  - *Chinese Civil War*
  - *KMT & Wuxia*







The Hong Kong Cinema Shift

- Hong Kong History
  - *Opium War*
  - *British Emporium of the East*
  - *Post-Chinese Civil War*
  - *Migration of the film industry*
- Shaw Brothers
- Export into Southeast Asia and other markets with Chinese-language communities



King Hu & the Opera Connection



- Opera's influence on martial arts films
- King Hu
  - *Come Drink with Me (1966)*
  - *Dragon Gate Inn (1967)*
  - *A Touch of Zen (1971)*
- Shooting style and use of new film technologies
- Construction of MA film archetypes



Swordplay Films after King Hu

- King Hu's archetypes
- Emphasis on literary connection
- Sinophone circulation
- Remakes



Global Production

- A Touch of Zen: Hong Kong, Taiwan
- Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: USA, Hong Kong, PRC
- Sinophone Networks





9/7 Critical Film Workshop

- Discuss film terms
- House of Flying Daggers Intro
- House of Flying Daggers Scene analysis

- No keywords today~

Every Frame a Painting

- How do you watch films? In a theater? At home? What kind of environment are you in? Do you take notes? How many times do you watch a film?
- Can films be critical texts?
- Let's build a list of terms you learned:

House of Flying Daggers 十面埋伏 (2004)

- Directed by Zhang Yimou. Starring Zhang Ziyi, Takeshi Kaneshiro, Any Lau
- Set in the Tang Dynasty (multiculturalism, active Silk Road, cosmopolitanism, flourishing art and literary culture.
- Transnational production



Trailer time



Close read this scene



WEEK 3

Everybody was Kung-Fu Fighting in East Asia

9/10 TRANSNATIONAL MARTIAL ARTS: DIASPORA AND CULTURE IN *CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON*

FACILITATION

- Keywords: diaspora, transnationalism, minor, sinophone, network

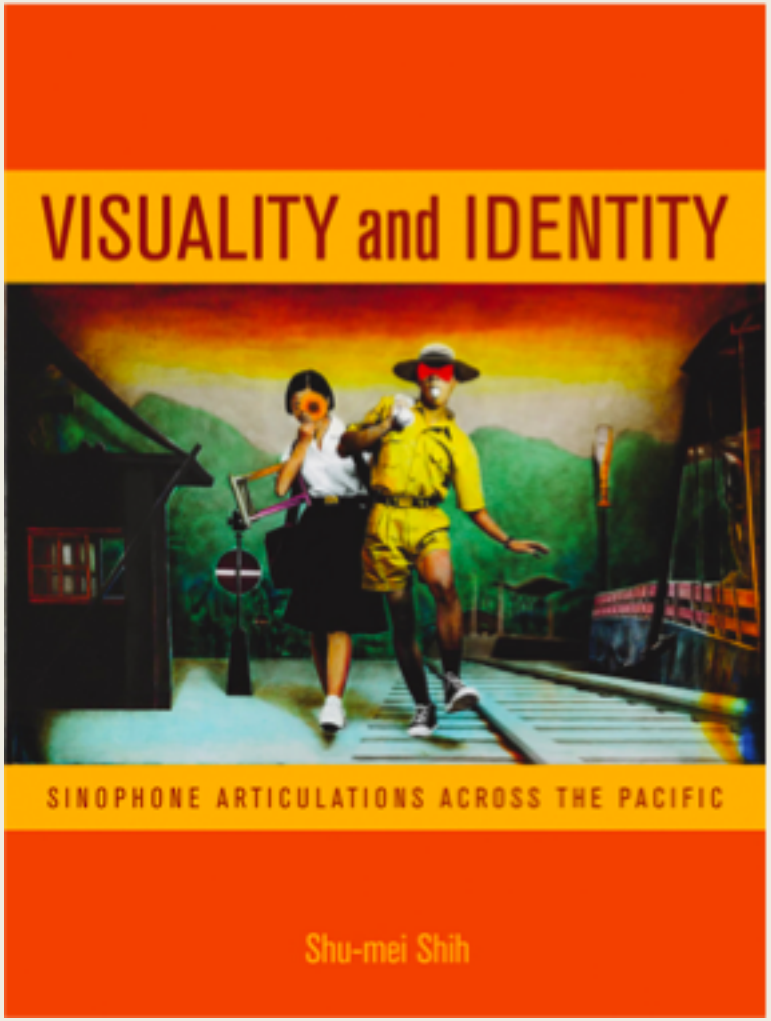


What is diaspora

- Diasporic populations
- Migration (forced or voluntary)
- Transnationalism
- Homeland
- Ethnic, cultural, linguistic ties

Defining the Sinophone

- Chinese-language
- Minor literature/ Minor transnationalism
- Anglophone, Francophone, Hispanophone
- Chinese vs Chineseness
  - *Language*
  - *Ethnicity*
  - *Culture*
  - *Geopolitical place*
  - *Historical concept*
- Localization
- Networked identities



Transnationalism

Diaspora

Sinophone

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon as Sinophone Cinema

- Sinophone Cinema
- Transnational Production
- Localized accents of the actors
- Presence of difference
- Visually unified world (mise en scene) of a historical China but a disruptive aurality



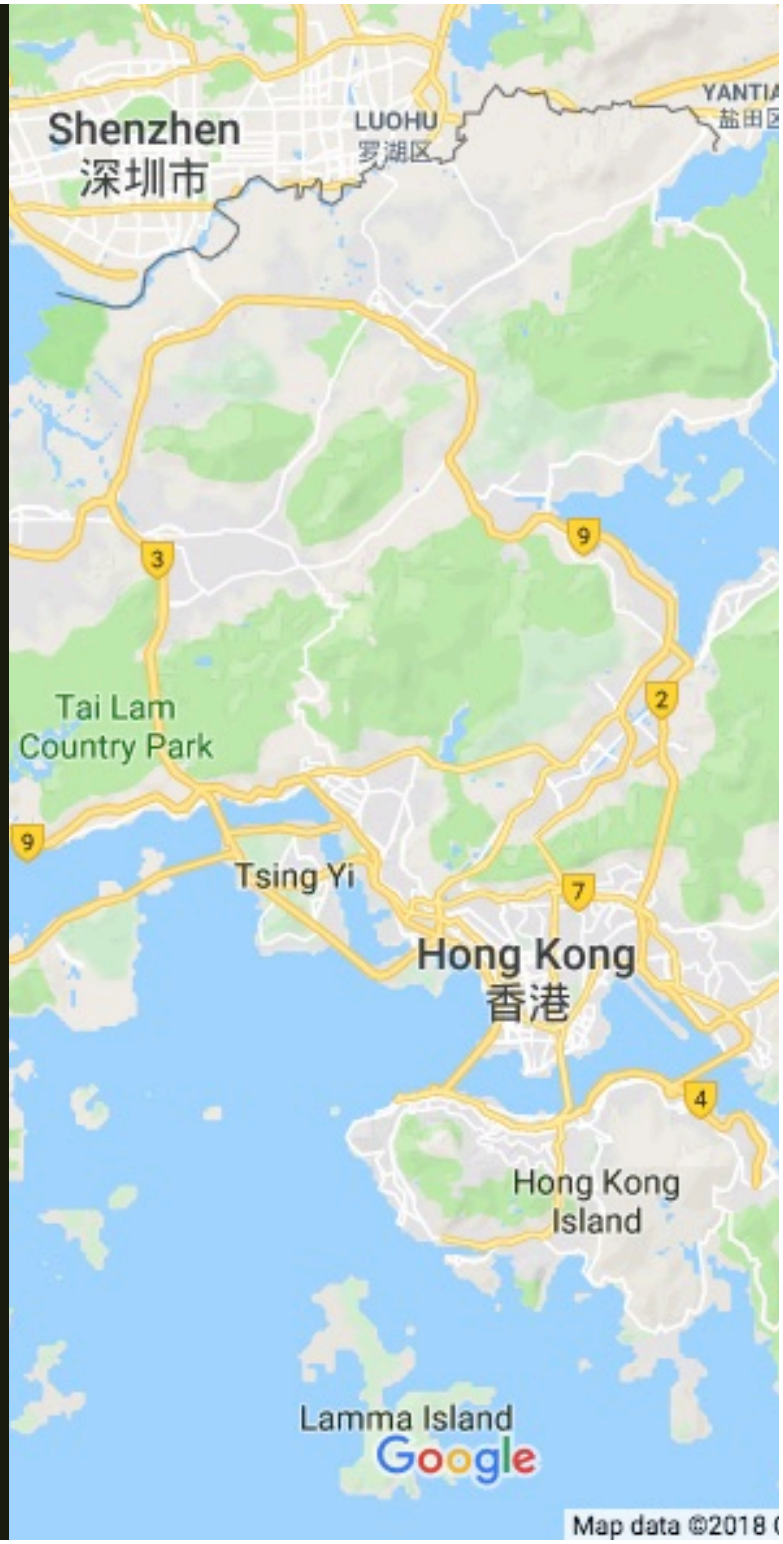
9/12 Hong Kong's Kung Fu: Coloniality, Cultural Authenticity, and Chineseness

- What image does your mind conjure when someone says, "Hong Kong"?
- What does it mean when something or someone is "authentic"?

- Keywords: Colonialism, Cultural Authenticity, Hong Kong

Hong Kong History

- Hong Kong in dynastic history
- Opium War 1839-1860
- Hong Kong during WWII
  - *Japanese Occupation*
- Hong Kong during the Chinese Civil War



Colonial Hong Kong

- Emporium of the East
- British Rule
  - *Colonial Control*
    - Racialized gaps
  - *Labor Disputes*
- Multilingualism
- Multi-ethnic Communities

Hong Kong Martial Arts Cinema

- Hong Kong & Sinophone Film Production
- King Hu & 1960s paradigm
- 1970s swordplay
  - *Mandarin & rise of Cantonese speaking*
  - *Graphic violence*
  - *Shift to male relationships/ masculinized rhetoric*
  - *Lasting influence on the global scale (think: Wu Tang Clan, Man with the Iron Fist)*

Revving towards 1997

- Sino-British Joint Declaration 1984
- Relative Creative Freedom
- Hong Kong New Wave
  - *Wong Kar-wai*
  - *Ann Hui*
  - *Peter Chan*
  - *Fruit Chan*
  - *Tsui Hark*
  - *John Woo*



Ashes of Time



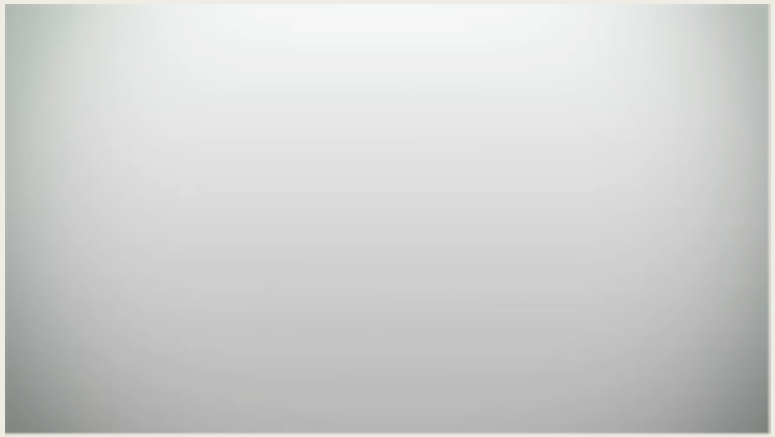
HONG KONG VS/AND CHINA

PIXLR + SCALAR

and a note on fair use and copyright

Fair Use & Copy Right

- Copyright and protections
  - *It protects your work too!*
- Fair use
  - *Appropriate amount*
  - *Transform it*
  - *Give credit*
  - *Not for profit*



SOFTWARE TIME

- Pixlr express vs editor
- If you want to use pro software (photoshop, illustrator) feel free to
- Apps that may be helpful to you
  - *Adobe offers compact versions of editing software as an app for your smartphone and tablet (ex: adobe draw) *usually free*
  - *Adobe spark (web), free, but has a logo at the bottom (you can cut it out on other apps)*
  - *Also freeware (gimp, pixlr, etc.)*
  - *Voyant/Wordle*
- Advice take or leave as you will
  - *Use pixlr if you don't want to bog down your computer*
  - *Use Adobe CC if you want more editing power (which may or may not be necessary depending on your project)*
  - *The most important thing is that you play around with the program, get used to the functions, and frequently save your work!*
  - *HACK YOUR TOOLS (Microsoft office, ppts, excel)*

WEEK 4

Battling it out: Fighting Genres in East Asia

KUNG FU HUSTLING

9/17

Keywords: Kung fu, third world, Bruce Lee, decontextualization, authenticity

Kung Fu vs Swordplay



- Fighting Style: fists vs swords
- Male centered images and narrative
- Dealing with third world struggle (1970s)
- Deemphasizing literature
- Global cultures





Bruce Lee

- American born, Hong Kong raised (1940-1973)
- Big Boss (1971)
- Fist of Fury (1972)
- Way of the Dragon (1972)
- Game of Death (1978)



Stephen Chow











THE POLITICS OF AUTHENTICITY

How is Kung Fu Hustle an “authentic” or “inauthentic” martial arts film?

What does it mean to de-contextualize Kung Fu for a global audience?

JAPAN, VIDEO GAMES, AND STREET FIGHTER

Shifting Genres and Inter-Asia Influence

BUT FIRST...
A POP QUIZ

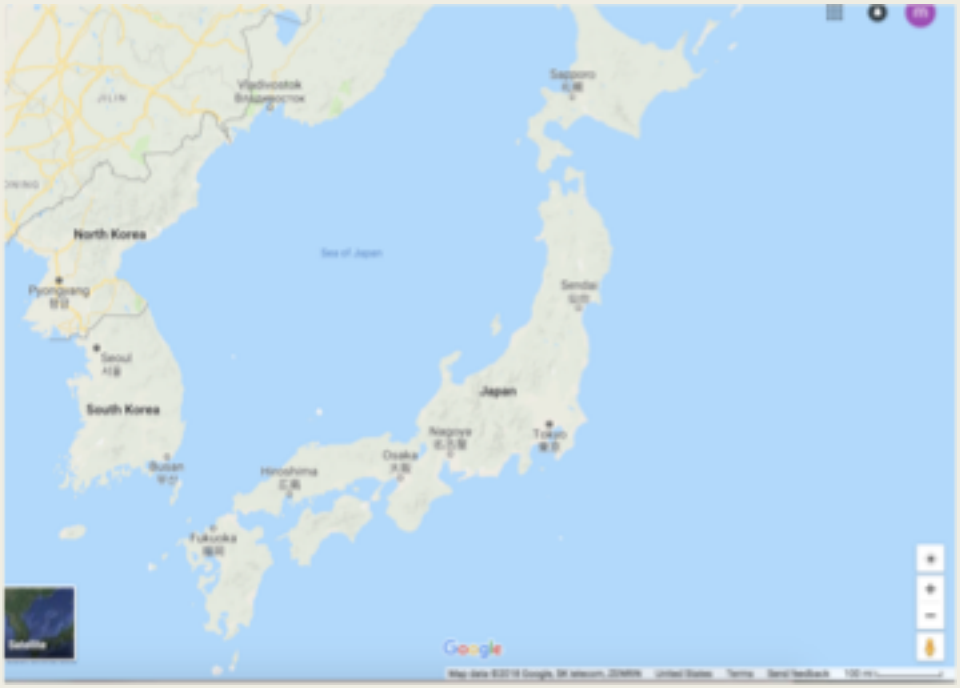
WRITE DOWN THE NAME OF ONE STREET FIGHTER CHARACTER

Street Fighter!!!!!!!

- Have you played Street Fighter before? If so, when, and how was that experience the same or different than playing it now? What kind of console did you use? How did that affect the way you viewed the game?
- What other fighting games have you played? How were those similar or different than playing Street Fighter?

- Keywords: Interasia, Interconnected, Medium Specificity



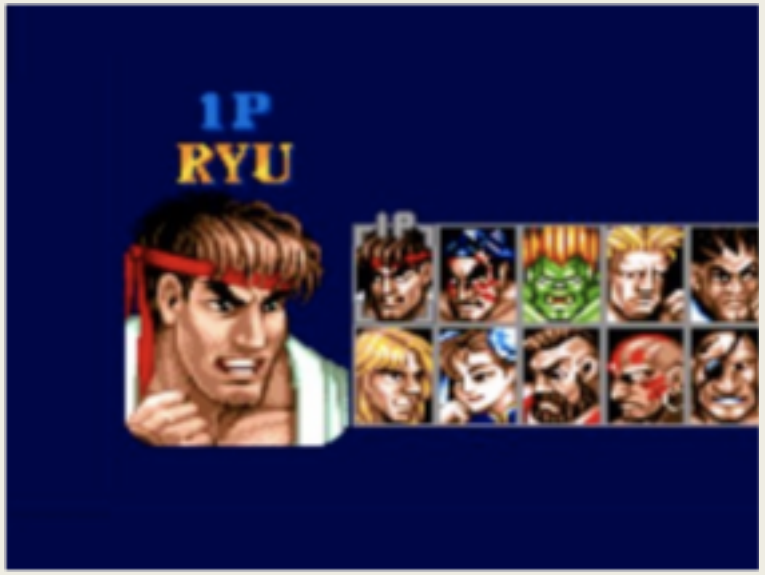


BUT FIRST A BIT OF JAPAN'S HISTORY...

WHY VIDEO GAMES!?

INTERASIA INFLUENCE





A few things to ponder

- What do you think about the representational politics in Street Fighter? How are the characters presented in the game? How are different ethnicities or genders depicted in the game?
- Considering Japan's push for soft power, how are video games like Street Fighter participating in such this discourse? How are they representing Japan on a global scale? What effect do video games have on our perception of Japan?



Friday
9/21
Digital
tools /
Platforms

List making

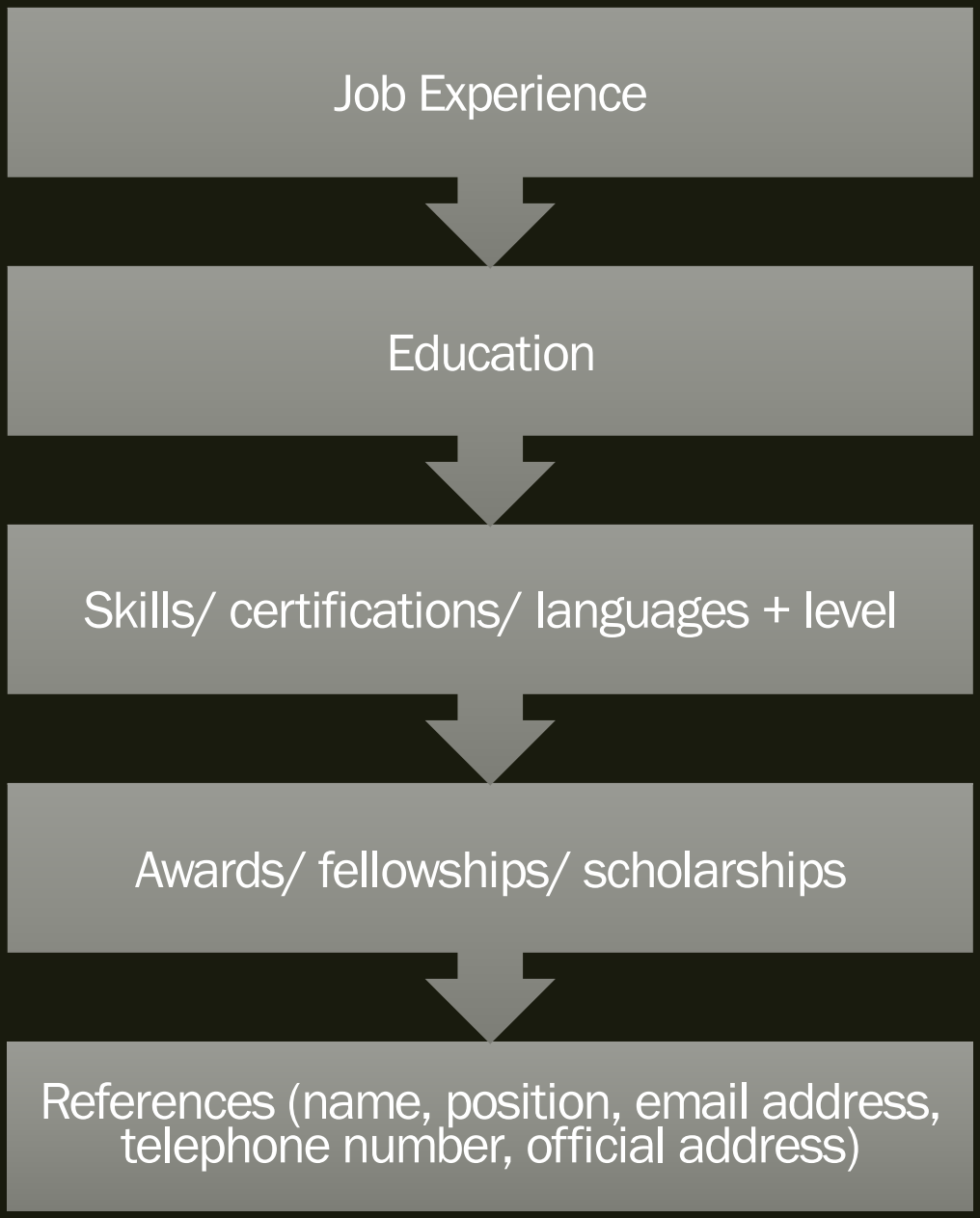
Workshop CV/
Resume

9am

- List of tools, platforms, or digital skills
  - *PixIr*
  - *Word- Microsoft suites*
  - *Languages (non-digital)*
  - *Adobe suites*
  - *Python, Javascript, swift*
  - *Scalar/ wordpress/ wix*
  - *Imovie*
  - *Social media (Twitter, Instragram, YouTube, Facebook, Linkedin)*
  - *Quickbooks*
  - *Spotify, soundcloud, tidal*

10am

- List of tools, platforms, or digital skills
  - *Photoshop (adobe suites, after effects, indesign)*
  - *Pixlr*
  - *Final cut pro x (imovie)*
  - *Logic pro x*
  - *Microsoft suites (excel, paint, word, ppt)*
  - *Social media (Instagram, twitter, tumblr, pinterest, Facebook, linkedin*
  - *SPSS, quickbooks*
  - *Final draft*
  - *R*
  - *Garageband, spotify, soundcloud*
  - *Twitch, YouTube, streaming/live*
  - *Mathlab*



Writing a resume

RESUME TIPS

- Tailor your resume for the job
- Put the most vital info first
- Quick and concise
- Play up your strengths
- More is not always better
- Imagine you're in the reviewer's shoes

WEEK 5

Remaking Asia: How Adaptations Shape National Histories

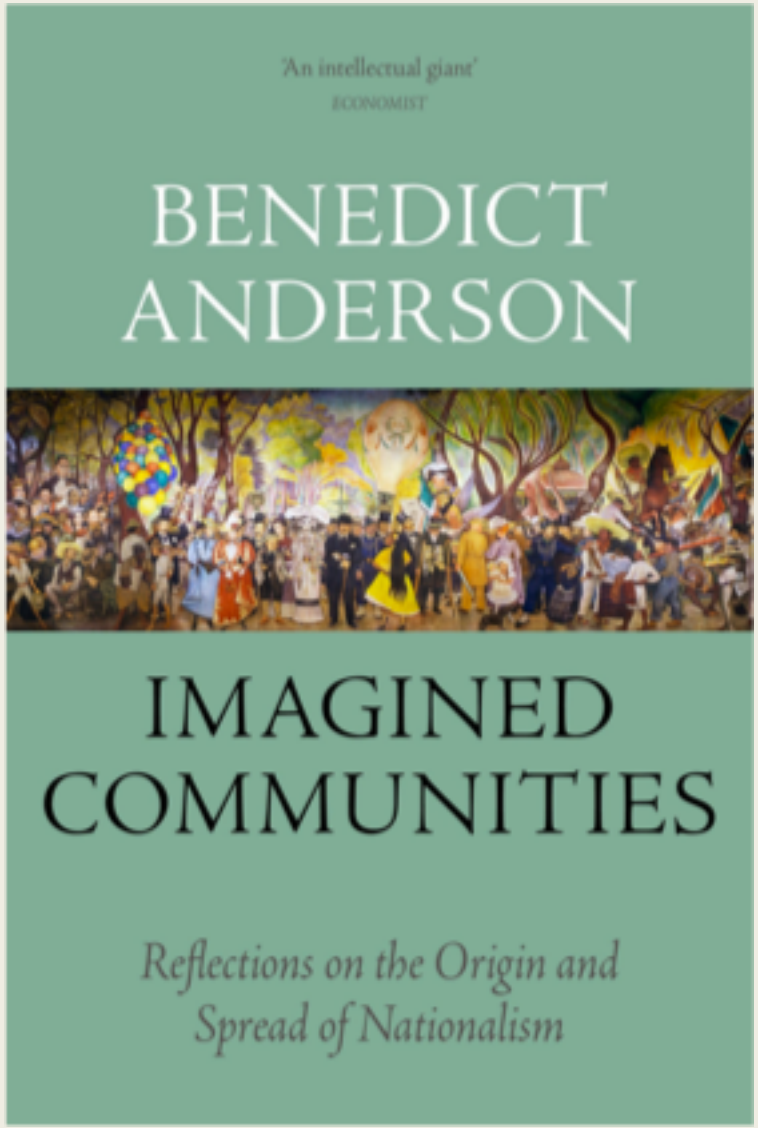
HOW DOES MEDIA IMAGINE ASIA

Imagined Communities

9/24 Discussion Questions

Imagined Communities

- Post- WWII era & Marxism
- “every successful revolution has defined itself in national terms”



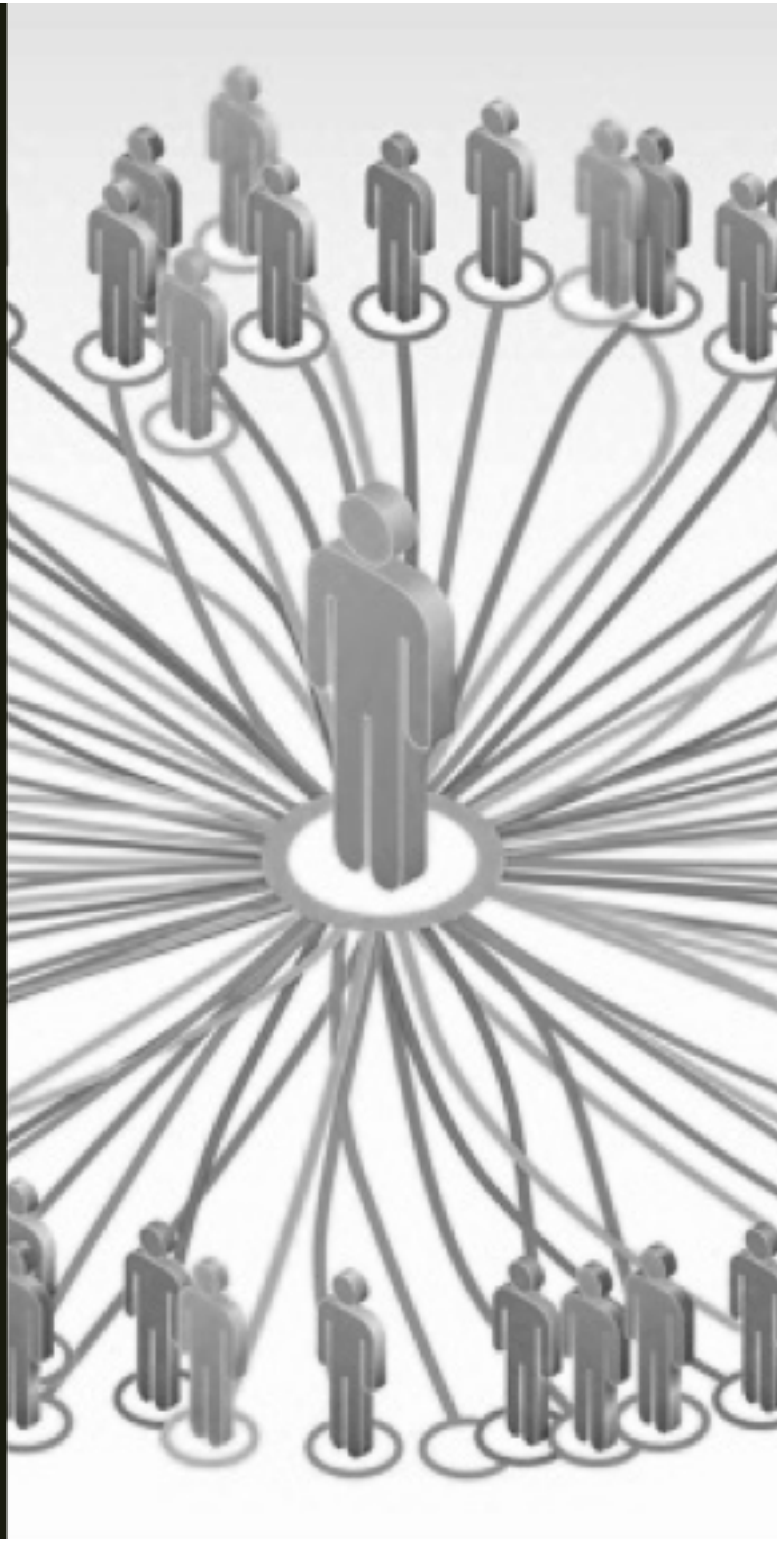


Nation National Nationalism

- Nationalism at its beginnings
- Three Paradoxes
- Nationalism as a pathology / Modern condition

IMAGINED COMMUNITY

- NATION & IMAGINED COMMUNITY
- Invention of a nation



9/24 Discussion

- What communities do you imagine yourself participating in? How have you found these communities? Have you ever considered yourself to be part of a community and later on not identifying with it or vice-versa? How do you participate in these communities? Can you be part of more than one imagined community at a time?
- How does the notion of an imagined community intersect with the ideas of authenticity that we have discussed?
- What kinds of imagined communities do you see at play in the media?

MEDIA PROJECT

9/26

Theories/ Concepts so far

- Popular Culture Studies
- Asia as Method
- Politics of Authenticity
- Interasia
- Soft Power
- Politics of Representation
- Transnationalism
- Sinophone
- Medium Specificity

MEDIA PROJECT WORKSHOP

9/28